

**House Bill 5509, An Act Concerning the Payment of  
Alimony and Child Support**

To The Judiciary Committee:

After reviewing Raised Bill 5509, and all the testimony from the Public Hearing on March 19, 2012, I am writing to voice my **opposition** to the Bill and request that it be killed.

I am a divorced, single mom of 4, self-employed as a Small Business and Life Coach and work primarily with divorced women.

I saw the comments by one of the Representatives suggesting that alimony keeps women from marrying again. If anything, the opposite is true... women feeling they need to marry again for financial security. No one should be rushing into second marriages given that the divorce rate for second marriages with children is higher than with first marriages!

Sadly, no one seems to be taking into account that many women in Connecticut, especially in Fairfield County, are well educated and had professional careers before jointly deciding with their spouses to give up those careers to raise children, manage their homes, and support their spouses' careers...a "job" I have seen valued anywhere from \$95,000-\$120,000.

After many years out of the work force, it is not possible for women to just pick up where they left off and we are usually limited legally as to how much we can make while receiving alimony and how far we can move away from the kids' father, forcing us to stay in one of the most expensive states in the country. In addition, no one has even considered the emotional effect any of this has on children, who have already lost one parent from the household.

Family Law in Connecticut is a mess, but Bill 5509 does nothing to really address the real issues! The Retroactive proposal would create complete chaos and backlog in a system that is already backlogged while imposing immediate financial hardship on women and children in Connecticut. In addition, I would argue that the cases where men are being wiped out and second wives forced to work multiple jobs to help pay their husband's

alimony are "few and far between" compared to the women who have been bled dry and are scraping by to support their children and keep their homes because of controlling, manipulative, narcissistic former husbands who constantly drag them back to court; are tormenting and destroying families with alienation tactics; and get away with contempt of court because the rules don't apply to them and it's too costly both financially and emotionally to take them back to court. This has not been my experience, but I see and hear about these situations every day in my work with divorced women.

If the Child Support numbers were not so pathetic (they have also not been updated since 2005 while gas and groceries and college expenses have more than skyrocketed in CT), and if support was in effect until a child finished college as in some other states (college kids are still usually home 4 months of the year, but no support is received after 18), there would probably not be such a need for longer-term alimony. In theory, alimony is meant to help the less-earning spouse rehabilitate to be able to support themselves, but in reality it goes toward supporting the kids and household.

I am in complete support of women moving on in all areas of their life after divorce. In my work, I inspire, empower, and support women in that goal. However, given that each family's circumstances are different, it is irrational to apply the "cookie cutter" solution that is being proposed in Raised Bill 5509.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter affecting many families in the state of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Colleen S. Bushby

---